

Leadership Support and Staff Competence on the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation in a Private Higher Education Institution

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ABSTRACT

ISO 21001:2018 is an international standard that helps academic institutions improve the quality of their educational services and management systems. This study examined how middle-level managers' leadership support and staff competence influence the implementation of ISO 21001:2018. It employed a descriptive-correlational design and was conducted in a private higher education institution in Ozamiz City, Philippines. The respondents were 121 non-teaching personnel identified through census sampling. Leadership Support, Staff Competence, and ISO 21001:2018 Implementation. Questionnaires were used in gathering the data. Weighted mean, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r), and multiple regression analysis were used in analyzing the data. Middle-level managers provide very adequate support, and staff demonstrate very high competence in implementing ISO 21001:2018. The standard is implemented to a great extent within the institution. Leadership support is associated with implementation effectiveness, and staff competence is likewise associated with it. Furthermore, attitudes and work values, knowledge and understanding of ISO standards, and communication and engagement emerged as key predictors of effective implementation. The study concludes that effective ISO 21001:2018 implementation is driven by strong leadership support, high staff competence, and these key factors. It is recommended that the institution sustain leadership support and enhance staff competence through continuous leadership development, targeted training, and strengthened quality assurance practices.

Keywords: *attitudes, ISO 21001:2018, leadership support, quality management, staff competence*

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Institutional audits have become essential for private higher education institutions as they help evaluate academic programs, administrative processes, and overall performance. These audits ensure that institutions maintain quality standards while promoting accountability and continuous improvement. By providing a structured framework for monitoring and improving operations, institutional audits help schools deliver better educational outcomes for their learners and stakeholders.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 21001:2018 is a standard that helps schools and universities improve the way they manage and deliver education. It provides a structured framework that aligns educational objectives with learner needs and stakeholder expectations (Alifana et al., 2025; Anam et al., 2025). By emphasizing evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement, the standard ensures that institutions remain responsive and adaptive to changing educational environments (Ramese et al., 2024; Vorobyova et al., 2022). It also fosters transparency, accountability, and consistency in processes, which enhance trust and confidence among students, parents, and regulatory bodies (Gbobaniyi et al., 2023). Ultimately, ISO 21001:2018 serves as a powerful tool for achieving excellence and sustainability in educational management (Abdulghani, 2025).

The successful implementation of ISO 21001:2018 depends not only on clear guidelines but also on human and organizational factors that drive its application (Rusmiati et al., 2023). For it to work well, two things

are very important: the support of school leaders and the competence of the staff (Kaur et al., 2024). Leaders provide direction, while staff ensure proper execution (Chiu et al., 2021).

In the context of this study, department heads are academic and administrative leaders who oversee units or departments and are responsible for guiding their teams, allocating resources, and ensuring ISO-related policies are implemented effectively. Staff, on the other hand, includes non-teaching personnel who are directly involved in performing academic, administrative, and support functions essential to implementing ISO 21001:2018 processes. These individuals play a critical role in translating institutional policies into daily practices that uphold quality standards.

Studies in Western and ASEAN higher education institutions have highlighted the critical role of leadership and staff competence in the success of institutional audits and quality management initiatives. For example, academic leaders provide vision, resources, and motivation, while skilled staff ensure processes are consistently applied, leading to improved institutional performance and credibility (Chiu et al., 2021; Gbobaniyi et al., 2023). Evidence from these contexts indicates that when leaders and staff collaborate, schools achieve a more effective implementation of international standards, such as ISO 21001:2018, resulting in greater satisfaction among students and stakeholders (Anam et al., 2025).

In the Philippines, the adoption of ISO 21001:2018 has been gradually embraced by several educational institutions seeking to enhance their management systems and align with global standards (Hillberry et al., 2025). Some private universities, colleges, and even basic education providers have obtained certification to demonstrate their commitment to quality education and continuous improvement (Rosiawan, 2022). These institutions integrate ISO 21001 principles into their governance, curriculum design, and student support systems, ensuring that all processes are learner-centered and outcome-based (Alifana et al., 2025). The certification also helps schools strengthen compliance with national regulations and accreditation requirements, while fostering a culture of accountability and innovation (Rusmiati et al., 2023). Moreover, implementing ISO 21001:2018 positions Philippine institutions competitively in the ASEAN region by promoting international recognition and credibility (Özkan, 2025). As more organizations adopt the standard, it becomes increasingly important to examine the factors that influence its successful implementation, particularly in private higher education (Awashreh, 2025).

As a private higher education institution in the Philippines committed to quality assurance and continuous improvement, the institution has strengthened its academic and administrative systems to align with internationally recognized standards. It is an educational institution that advocates a progressive, dynamic education, upholding the principle that God is the center of its existence and that education is its service to God and country. For its quality management system, it is ISO-certified by Det Norske Veritas, the Netherlands. It offers varied academic programs designed for a comprehensive, flexible learning environment to meet global challenges and demands for quality graduates; some of these programs have reached different accreditation levels through the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA).

Leadership support is crucial to ensuring that ISO 21001:2018 is effective in higher education institutions. When leaders show support, they help build loyalty, inclusion, and teamwork, which improves how the institution performs (Gbobaniyi et al., 2023). Without strong leadership backing, even motivated staff or informal leaders may lose energy and feel less satisfied in their roles (Chiu et al., 2021). Supportive leaders also help reduce stress and guide employees toward better performance, especially when workplace challenges arise (Ahli et al., 2024). In this way, leadership becomes a key driver in aligning policies, setting clear goals, and guiding the whole institution towards quality education.

At the same time, leadership support encourages innovation and staff engagement, both of which are necessary for schools to keep up with global changes and new technologies. Leaders who practice transformational and ethical leadership inspire employees to remain committed and motivated, making it easier to follow quality standards such as ISO 21001:2018 (Owusu-Agyeman et al., 2021). Empirical evidence further indicates that when leaders model positive behaviors, such as caring for the environment, employees are more likely to follow (Nie et al., 2023). Additionally, proactive leadership is critical in safeguarding institutions from

contemporary risks, such as cybersecurity threats, by ensuring robust policies and preparedness are in place (Cheng & Wang, 2022). Ultimately, strong leadership extends beyond effective management; it involves steering the entire institution toward greater accountability, quality, and excellence, particularly in alignment with ISO 21001:2018 (Khassawneh & Elrehail, 2022).

On the other hand, staff competence is a key factor in the success of ISO 21001:2018 implementation, as qualified, well-trained employees ensure that systems and standards are applied effectively. A study in Ghana shows that training, development, and workplace diversity positively affect staff performance and contribute to better outcomes in higher education institutions (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2021). In fact, competent staff directly improve service quality and student satisfaction, making them essential to the education process (Singh & Jasial, 2021). Competency development also matters in specialized fields, such as auditing, where balancing efficiency with continuous skills improvement enhances long-term performance (Wang et al., 2022). Studies further highlight the importance of skills gap analysis and competency management systems to ensure that staff abilities align with organizational goals (Kaur et al., 2024). These findings suggest that developing staff competence is not only about technical skills, but also about creating a workplace culture that values learning and continuous improvement.

Moreover, staff competence must adapt to changes in technology, organizational culture, and student needs. With the rise of artificial intelligence and digital tools, employees need reskilling to remain effective and take on more strategic roles within institutions (Sakka et al., 2022; Cox, 2023). Competency is also linked to accountability and evaluation capacity, showing that skilled staff are better able to meet both internal and external expectations (Bryan et al., 2021). However, *knowledge gaps*, such as the use of mobile technology in academic libraries, can hinder service delivery if staff are not adequately trained (Acheampong & Agyemang, 2021). Employee empowerment and digital literacy are also shown to strengthen staff competence, especially when supported by an organizational learning culture (Nimran et al., 2024, and Koch & Fehlmann, 2025). Altogether, these studies emphasize that competent staff are at the core of ISO 21001:2018 implementation, as their skills, adaptability, and accountability determine whether institutions can truly achieve educational quality and effectiveness.

The effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 lies in its ability to provide a structured, learner-centered quality management system for educational institutions. Studies highlight that the standard helps schools and universities align their processes with stakeholder needs, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement (Anam et al., 2025). By adopting ISO 21001:2018, higher education institutions improve their international recognition, risk management, and consistency in delivering quality education (Ramese et al., 2024, and Vorobyova et al., 2022). Research also shows that the standard enhances institutional governance and accreditation, promoting systematic evaluations and transparent audits (Alifana et al., 2025). The integration of ISO 21001 encourages the use of evidence-based decision-making and strategic planning, which have led to better academic outcomes (Rosiawan, 2022; Abdulghani, 2025). The effectiveness is reflected in stronger stakeholder trust, improved service quality, and long-term sustainability for institutions (Hillberry, 2025, and Rusmiati, 2023).

Implementing ISO 21001:2018 also addresses the challenges higher education institutions face in adapting to a competitive, fast-changing environment. Institutional performance is strengthened through systematic monitoring, participatory governance, and staff engagement (Anam et al., 2025). The standard supports outcome-based education by structuring and measuring learning delivery (Rosiawan, 2022), while also fostering leadership accountability and the effective use of resources (Abdulghani, 2025). Institutions that adopt ISO 21001 benefit from increased efficiency, reduced costs, and enhanced attractiveness to students and funding agencies (Ramese et al., 2024; Rusmiati, 2023). However, effective implementation requires leadership commitment, adequate training, and internal evaluations to address existing gaps (Fitri & Muhajir et al., 2025). Thus, ISO 21001:2018 is not just a compliance framework but a transformative tool that helps higher education institutions achieve quality assurance, competitiveness, and sustainable development (Hillberry, 2025; Vorobyova et al., 2022).

This study examined the influence of leadership support and staff competence on the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation in a private higher education institution in the Philippines. It sought to

understand how administrative commitment, guidance, and resource allocation, alongside staff knowledge, skills, and training, contribute to sustaining a quality management system that fosters continuous improvement and customer satisfaction. While many higher education institutions have obtained ISO certifications to enhance educational quality, there is still limited empirical evidence on how internal factors, particularly leadership and staff competence, directly affect the success and long-term effectiveness of ISO implementation in the Philippine context. By addressing this knowledge gap, the study aimed to provide insights that can guide educational leaders and policymakers in strengthening institutional quality assurance mechanisms and ensuring that ISO certification translates into improved academic and administrative outcomes.

The findings of this study are valuable for higher education administrators, policymakers, faculty, staff, and students, as they highlight the importance of leadership support and staff competence in the effective implementation of ISO 21001:2018. Strong leadership commitment and continuous professional development not only enhance governance and resource allocation but also create a culture of quality and improvement. For faculty and staff, this means greater opportunities for growth and efficiency in their roles, while students benefit from improved services, standardized processes, and a more supportive learning environment. Policymakers and accrediting bodies can also use these insights to refine quality assurance frameworks, ensuring that ISO certification translates into meaningful institutional performance, stronger stakeholder trust, and sustainable best practices in higher education.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored in Transformational Leadership Theory by Bass (1985), Human Capital Theory advanced by Gary S. Becker (1993), and The Theory of Planned Behavior developed by Icek Ajzen (2020).

Transformational Leadership Theory, introduced by Bernard Bass (1985), describes leadership as a process in which leaders inspire and motivate followers to go beyond minimum expectations and strive for higher levels of performance. This theory emphasizes that effective leaders not only manage tasks but also influence attitudes, shape values, and build commitment to a shared vision. Transformational leadership is anchored on four key components: idealized influence (serving as a role model), inspirational motivation (communicating a clear and meaningful vision), intellectual stimulation (encouraging innovation and critical thinking), and individualized consideration (providing personal support and guidance to followers). Through these dimensions, leaders can cultivate trust, strengthen morale, and foster a culture that values collaboration and continuous improvement. Rather than relying solely on authority or rewards, transformational leaders empower their members and encourage them to take ownership of organizational goals.

The relevance of this theory to the present study lies in its focus on leadership support as a key driver of positive organizational change. In ISO 21001:2018 implementation, leaders play an essential role in guiding personnel toward embracing quality management principles. When leaders demonstrate commitment to quality standards, offer encouragement, and actively involve staff in improvement initiatives, they help build a culture in which ISO practices are understood and appreciated. Transformational leadership, therefore, explains how leadership support can strengthen staff engagement and competence, which are necessary for the successful and sustainable implementation of ISO 21001:2018 within the institution.

Empirical studies further support the application of Transformational Leadership Theory in organizational and educational settings. Accordingly, transformational leadership significantly improves organizational performance by enhancing employee motivation and commitment. The integration of transformational leadership in organizations positively influences follower engagement and organizational effectiveness. In educational contexts, Leithwood et al. (2006) showed that transformational leadership improves school performance by fostering collaboration, shared goals, and continuous improvement. These studies collectively support this study's findings by highlighting that transformational leadership enhances leadership support, which, in turn, strengthens the implementation of quality management systems such as ISO 21001:2018.

Meanwhile, the *Human Capital Theory* explains that individuals' knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences are valuable assets that contribute to both personal productivity and organizational performance (Becker, 1993). The theory posits that investments in education, training, and professional development enhance

human capabilities, which in turn lead to improved efficiency, effectiveness, and economic outcomes. Human capital is not innate; it is developed through deliberate investment, making it a critical factor in organizational success. This theory underscores the importance of continuous learning and capacity building as key drivers of growth and performance at both the individual and institutional levels.

Staff competence plays a vital role in the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation, as it reflects the institution's human capital. When staff possess strong knowledge of ISO standards, appropriate skills, and positive work attitudes, they are better able to implement standardized processes, ensure compliance, and contribute to continuous improvement. In this context, staff competence directly influences the effectiveness of quality management systems, as competent employees are better equipped to interpret guidelines, apply procedures, and adapt to changing organizational demands. Thus, the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation is strengthened when institutions invest in developing their workforce's human capital through training, education, and professional development.

Empirical studies support the relevance of Human Capital Theory in explaining staff competence and organizational effectiveness. Becker and Gary (1993) established that investments in human capital significantly improve productivity and performance outcomes. Noe and Raymond (2020) found that employee training and development enhance individual performance and organizational effectiveness. In addition, Salas et al. (2021) demonstrated that structured training programs improve both competencies and organizational results. These studies support the findings of this research, indicating that staff competence developed through continuous investment in human capital is essential for the successful implementation of ISO 21001:2018 and for achieving sustained quality improvement.

The *Theory of Planned Behavior*, developed by Icek Ajzen (2020), explains how individual behavior is shaped by three key factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The theory posits that individuals are more likely to engage in a behavior if they have a positive attitude toward it, believe significant others support it, and feel confident in their ability to perform it. These components interact to form behavioral intentions, which ultimately lead to actual behavior. The theory emphasizes that intention is the immediate antecedent of action, making it a valuable framework for understanding how beliefs and perceptions influence behavior in organizational and institutional settings.

Relating this to the findings, attitudes and work values significantly influence the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation. When staff demonstrate positive attitudes toward quality management and strong work values, they are more likely to exhibit commitment, accountability, and active participation in continuous improvement initiatives. Subjective norms, such as leadership expectations and organizational culture, further reinforce compliance with ISO standards by encouraging shared responsibility and collective engagement. Perceived behavioral control, reflected in employees' knowledge and competence, enhances their confidence in executing ISO-related tasks. As a result, favorable attitudes, supportive environments, and strong competencies collectively contribute to more effective implementation of ISO 21001:2018.

Empirical studies support the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior in organizational and behavioral contexts. Ajzen and Icek (2020) emphasized that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control are strong predictors of behavioral intentions and actions. Armitage et al. (2001) demonstrated that the theory effectively predicts a wide range of human behaviors across different contexts. In organizational studies, Hagger et al. (2020) found that the theory reliably explains intention and behavior in workplace and health-related settings. These studies support this research's findings, indicating that positive attitudes, supportive norms, and strong perceived control among staff contribute to the effective implementation of ISO 21001:2018 and the success of quality management systems.

Conceptual Framework

The successful Implementation of ISO 21001:2018 in higher education institutions depends on the interplay between leadership support and staff competence, which serve as the independent variables, and organizational effectiveness, which is the dependent variable. Leadership support provides direction and sustainability through a clear vision and strategic alignment, adequate resources and capacity building, open

communication and Engagement, as well as systematic monitoring, recognition, and commitment to continuous Improvement. Equally important is staff competence, which includes knowledge and understanding of ISO standards, technical proficiency, opportunities for training and professional development, and a positive attitude and work values that uphold quality assurance. Together, these factors influence the overall effectiveness of ISO implementation, particularly in delivering quality services, maintaining process efficiency and compliance, ensuring stakeholder satisfaction, and fostering continuous Improvement that strengthens institutional credibility and excellence.

Leadership Support serves as the foundation of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation. It represents the visible commitment and proactive involvement of administrators in integrating the quality management system into institutional processes and culture. According to Awashreh (2025), effective leaders in higher education set the tone for innovation, motivate employees, and create an environment conducive to sustainable Improvement. In the same way, Anam et al. (2025) emphasize that leadership ensures that quality assurance becomes a strategic priority rather than a formality. This includes shaping a clear vision and strategic direction, providing adequate resources and opportunities for capacity building, facilitating open communication and Engagement, and ensuring systematic monitoring, recognition, and continuous Improvement.

Vision and Strategic Direction refer to a clear, well-communicated vision that guides how the institution interprets and implements ISO 21001:2018. Leaders who align the standard's principles with the school's mission and values create coherence and shared purpose across all levels of the organization. Anam et al. (2025) found that institutions with well-defined quality visions are more likely to sustain compliance and continuous Improvement. Similarly, Fitri and Muhajir (2025) and Alifana et al. (2025) reported that visionary leadership enhances the integration of ISO frameworks with institutional objectives, thereby improving performance and accountability.

Resource Provision and Capacity Building encompass the requirement in ISO 21001:2018 for adequate resources and continuous staff development. Gbobniyi et al. (2023) explain that institutional support and resource allocation foster loyalty, efficiency, and innovation. Ahli et al. (2024) likewise found that when leaders provide training and resources, employees experience less stress and perform better. Additionally, training and workplace development activities improve both organizational performance and employee satisfaction (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2021). Thus, resource provision and capacity building ensure that the leadership's vision translates into tangible improvements.

Communications and Engagement refer to how leadership support is strengthened by transparent communication and inclusive participation. The inclusion of active communication between leaders and employees increases satisfaction, Engagement, and pro-environmental or quality-oriented behavior. Awashreh (2025) further underscores that, in higher education, leadership communication fosters trust and collaboration, which are essential for implementing quality management systems. Open dialogue and regular feedback help align everyone's efforts with the institution's ISO 21001 goals.

Monitoring, Recognition, and Continuous Improvement involve establishing metrics and feedback loops, acknowledging achievements, and implementing incremental improvements over time. Leadership's responsibility extends to monitoring performance, recognizing accomplishments, and sustaining progress. Effective leaders create systems that combine evaluation with motivation to drive continuous Improvement (Özkan, 2025). The same was found by Rusmiati et al. (2023), who found that readiness assessments and regular performance reviews support ISO consistency. Abdulghani (2025) shows that structured gap analysis and monitoring, such as the 8D methodology, enhance compliance and foster a culture of Improvement. Thus, leadership support is not static; it evolves through continuous reflection and improvement efforts.

Staff Competence complements leadership support as the human engine of ISO 21001:2018 implementation. It refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable faculty and staff to meet institutional quality standards and perform effectively. As Kaur et al. (2024) describe, staff competency integrates technical expertise and behavioral qualities that contribute to institutional success. In this study, staff competency is operationally defined as the ability of faculty and staff at Misamis University to demonstrate the required professional and interpersonal qualities that support the successful Implementation of ISO 21001:2018

standards. The variable will be assessed through four constructs, namely: knowledge and understanding of ISO standards, skills and technical proficiency, training and professional development, and attitudes and work values.

Knowledge and understanding refer to the understanding and familiarity staff have of the policies, procedures, standards, and subject matter required to perform their roles effectively. In operational terms, in this study, knowledge will be assessed by how well faculty, staff, and students perceive they understand the ISO phases, institutional quality-assurance policies, and the practical requirements of ISO 21001:2018 at Misamis University. Staff awareness of ISO standards, policies, and procedures is the foundation of effective Implementation. Acheampong and Agyemang (2021) found that staff knowledge directly affects the success of technological and service improvements. Cox (2023) similarly highlighted that digital and institutional literacy allows employees to adapt to new systems and maintain quality performance. Adu-Gyamfi et al. (2021) also stressed that familiarity with internal standards promotes compliance and alignment with institutional goals.

Skills and Technical Proficiency encompass the practical and technical abilities staff possess to meet their tasks, adapt to changes, use tools, execute procedures, and perform their roles at the required standard. In this study, skills will be operationalized by how faculty and staff rate their proficiency in executing work processes, handling ISO-required tools or methods, adapting to changes in ISO audit or compliance procedures, and learning new skills relevant to quality management. Technical proficiency ensures that staff can apply ISO principles in daily operations. Kaur et al. (2024) note that effective competency management enhances both individual and organizational performance. Nimran et al. (2024) argue that empowering employees to develop their technical skills strengthens commitment and adaptability. Wang et al. (2022) confirm that staff skill development improves efficiency and precision in project execution, an essential quality for managing ISO 21001 systems.

Training and Professional Development are crucial for staff competence in ISO implementation, as recent empirical research shows that structured training enhances knowledge of the standard and boosts organizational outcomes. Training and Professional Development foster continuous growth and capability enhancement. Adu-Gyamfi et al. (2021) emphasize that internal CSR activities, such as ongoing training, create resilient organizations. Koch and Fehlmann (2025) found that digital and professional development opportunities enable staff to perform better in evolving educational environments. Alifana et al. (2025) further noted that ISO 21001:2018-aligned training improves institutional quality and employee engagement. Regular training ensures that staff remain competent and adaptable to new ISO requirements.

Attitudes and Work Values refer to personal dispositions such as motivation, ethical commitment, openness to change, and belief in the importance of quality, which influence how staff engage with their roles beyond mere skills and knowledge. Operationally, this will be measured by how much staff and students agree that they value quality, perceive personal responsibility for compliance, are motivated by institutional quality goals, and hold ethical standards in carrying out ISO-related roles. Ashfaq et al. (2021) found that ethical leadership builds self-efficacy and positive work engagement. Gbobaniyi et al. (2023) also revealed that supportive leadership enhances academic loyalty and strengthens positive work behavior. Nie et al. (2023) add that leaders who communicate clear expectations foster proactive, quality-oriented attitudes among staff. Positive work values foster collaboration and long-term sustainability of ISO standards.

The Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation reflects how successfully the institution embeds quality management principles into its systems and culture. According to Vorobyova et al. (2022), the ISO 21001 framework strengthens higher education quality through stakeholder-centered processes, transparency, and accountability. In this study, the variable is operationally defined as the degree to which Misamis University has successfully embedded ISO 21001:2018 standards in its academic and administrative processes to ensure quality education and service delivery. The effectiveness will be evaluated through six key constructs: *leadership commitment and support, staff competence and training, process standardization and compliance, documentation and record management, communication and awareness, and continuous Improvement*. Together, these constructs provide a holistic framework for assessing the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation and sustainability within the institution.

Leadership Commitment and Support refer to the active Engagement of top management in providing direction, resources, and visible involvement in the ISO process. Awashreh (2025) and Gbobaniyi et al. (2023) affirm that leadership engagement is central to ISO success. In this study, it will be measured by how often university leaders allocate budget, endorse ISO policies, and participate in quality assurance activities in Misamis University. Anam et al. (2025) found that when leaders actively support ISO initiatives, quality goals align more closely with institutional missions, enhancing overall effectiveness. These findings confirm that leadership commitment is foundational for ISO effectiveness.

Staff competence and Training refer to the knowledge and skills staff possess, as well as the ongoing learning activities that improve performance and alignment with ISO standards. Operationalized in this study as how regularly faculty and staff receive ISO focused training, their perceived ability to apply ISO procedures, and improvements in performance after training. Koch and Fehlmann (2025) explain that empowering staff through skill-building directly improves institutional performance. Fitri and Muhajir (2025) also confirm that systematic training programs ensure consistency and compliance with ISO 21001:2018 standards. Therefore, competence and training are critical pillars for effective ISO implementation.

Process Standardization and Compliance refer to the extent to which processes are clearly defined, documented, and consistently followed in line with ISO 21001 requirements and deviations. Rusmiati et al. (2023) reported that consistent procedures and documented processes improve readiness for ISO certification. Similarly, Hillberry et al. (2025) noted that process standardization enhances operational efficiency and educational quality. In this study, this will be assessed using survey items on the presence of standard operating procedures, adherence to those policies, and the frequency of non-conformance. Thus, process standardization and compliance are decisive in determining ISO effectiveness.

Documentation and record management cover accurate, up-to-date, accessible documents and systematic record-keeping that supports audits, accountability, and organizational memory. Operationalization in this study involves asking faculty, staff, and students about the availability, reliability, and frequency of updates of ISO-related documentation, and how easy it is to retrieve records when needed. Abdulghani (2025) found that systematic documentation supports accountability and continuous evaluation. Fitri and Muhajir (2025) added that record management ensures institutional transparency and adherence to ISO guidelines. As a result, documentation and records are integral to the effectiveness of ISO implementation.

Communication and Awareness concerns how clearly ISO objectives, roles, and changes are communicated and how well stakeholders understand their responsibilities. This study will measure perceptions of how well ISO policies are shared, how often stakeholders receive information or updates, and how aware students/staff are about their part in ISO compliance. Effective ISO implementation depends on how well information and roles are communicated. Özkan (2025) highlighted that transparent communication promotes understanding and Engagement, while Awashreh (2025) noted that inclusive communication nurtures teamwork and shared responsibility.

Continuous Improvement refers to the ongoing process of monitoring, evaluating, learning from feedback or audit results, and refining procedures to better meet quality goals. Continuous Improvement ensures that institutions remain adaptable and innovative. Anam et al. (2025) and Rusmiati et al. (2023) both emphasize that constant evaluation and refinement enhance educational quality and sustainability. In this study, this construct will be operationalized as the frequency of internal audits, corrective actions, feedback systems, and process changes being tracked and implemented. Thus, continuous Improvement is not just a desired outcome but a dynamic mechanism sustaining ISO effectiveness.

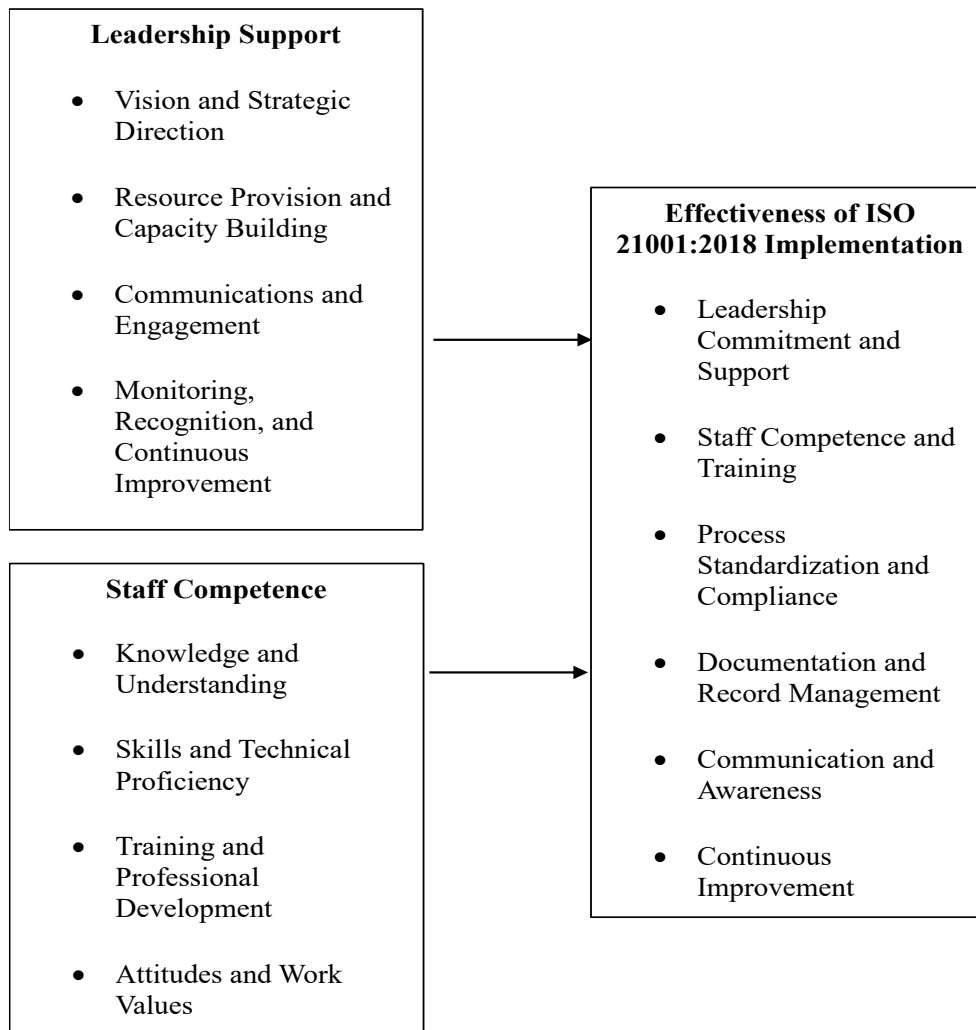


Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to understand how middle-level managers' leadership support and staff competence contributed to the successful implementation of ISO 21001:2018 in a private higher education institution. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of leadership support provided by middle-level managers during the implementation of ISO 21001:2018 in terms of vision and strategic direction, resource provision and capacity building, communication and engagement, and monitoring, recognition, and continuous improvement?
2. What is the level of staff competence in carrying out ISO 21001:2018 in terms of their knowledge and understanding of ISO standards, their skills and technical proficiency, the training and professional development they receive, and their attitudes and work values?
3. To what extent is the implementation of ISO 21001:2018 effective particularly in the areas of leadership commitment and support, staff competence and training, process standardization and compliance, documentation and record management, communication and awareness, and continuous improvement?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the middle-level managers' leadership support and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the staff competence and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation?

6. Which variables significantly predict the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the middle-level managers' leadership support and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between the staff competence and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

Ho3: Middle-level managers' leadership support and staff competence do significantly predict the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

This study used a descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationship between leadership support, staff competence, and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation in private higher education institutions. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this design is used to measure the association or predictive relationship between variables as they naturally occur, without manipulating the research environment. It also allows the researcher to determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables (Bhandari, 2021). This design was particularly appropriate for the study because it directly addresses the general problem of understanding how leadership support and staff competence influence the successful implementation of ISO 21001:2018.

Setting

The study was conducted in a private higher education institution located in Ozamiz City, Philippines. The university was widely recognized as one of the leading institutions in the region, known for its strong academic standards, student-centered programs, and active engagement in research and community service. It was ISO 21001:2018 certified, demonstrating its commitment to maintaining a learner-focused educational management system and ensuring consistent quality in its academic and administrative processes.

In addition to its ISO certification, the institution holds multiple accreditations from the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) and has earned Institutional Sustainability Assessment (ISA) recognition from the Commission on Higher Education. The university offered programs ranging from basic education to undergraduate and graduate studies, emphasizing holistic development and global competitiveness. With its culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and quality assurance, the institution provided an ideal environment for examining the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

Respondents

The respondents of the study consisted of all non-teaching personnel of the private higher education institution in Ozamiz City, Philippines. Since the study intended to include every qualified member of this group, it employed total population sampling. This purposive sampling technique included all individuals who met the criteria, ensuring comprehensive representation. This approach was appropriate given the manageable size of the institution's non-teaching workforce and their direct involvement in ISO 21001:2018 implementation, allowing the study to capture a complete perspective on leadership support, staff competence, and the overall effectiveness of the institution's educational management system.

The inclusion criteria covered all full-time non-teaching personnel, including administrative, technical, laboratory-in-charge, and support staff, who were directly involved in institutional processes and had rendered at least 3 years of service. This ensured that respondents possessed adequate familiarity with the institution's

quality management practices. Only individuals who voluntarily agreed to participate and provided informed consent were included.

Instruments

To gather the necessary data for this study, a researcher-made questionnaire was employed as the primary research instrument.

A. Leadership Support Questionnaire. The instrument designed to measure leadership support focused on four main constructs: vision and strategic direction; resource provision and capacity building; communication and engagement; and monitoring, recognition, and continuous improvement. It was composed of 40-item statements utilizing a 4-point Likert scale with the following responses: 4 – Strongly Agree (SA), 3 – Agree (A), 2 – Disagree (D), and 1 – Strongly Disagree (SD).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the researcher-made instrument, it underwent a pilot test with a small group of respondents who were not part of the final study population. Statistical analysis was used to assess reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient; values of 0.70 or higher were considered acceptable for establishing internal consistency. Through this process, the instrument was expected to provide accurate, reliable, and meaningful data for analyzing leadership support in relation to the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation. The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.9371, indicating excellent internal consistency. The following scale was used in determining the level of leadership support:

Responses	Continuum	Interpretation
4 - Strongly Agree (SA)	3.45 – 4.00	Very Adequate (VA)
3 - Agree (A)	2.50 – 3.24	Adequate (A)
2 - Disagree (DA)	1.25 – 2.49	Less Adequate (LA)
1 - Strongly Disagree (SDA)	1.00 – 1.74	Not Adequate (NA)

B. Staff Competence Questionnaire. The instrument designed to measure staff competence focused on key constructs that reflected the capabilities required for effective ISO 21001:2018 implementation. These included professional knowledge and skills, training and development, work performance and efficiency, and adaptability to quality management processes. The construct of staff competence included knowledge and understanding of ISO standards; skills and technical proficiency; training and professional development; and attitudes and work values. It was composed of 40-item statements utilizing a 4-point Likert scale with the following responses: 4 – Strongly Agree (SA), 3 – Agree (A), 2 – Disagree (D), and 1 – Strongly Disagree (SD).

To establish the instrument's validity and reliability, a pilot test was administered to a selected group of respondents outside the main study sample. This ensured that the items were clear, relevant, and aligned with the study objectives. Reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, where a value of 0.70 or above confirmed acceptable internal consistency. With these measures, the instrument was expected to generate accurate and dependable data on staff competence as it related to the effective implementation of ISO 21001:2018 in the higher education institution. The instrument's reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of 0.8758, indicating very good internal consistency. The following scale was used in determining the level of staff competence:

Responses	Continuum	Interpretation
4 - Strongly Agree (SA)	3.45 – 4.00	Very High (VH)
3 - Agree (A)	2.50 – 3.24	High (H)

2 - Disagree (DA)	1.25 – 2.49	Low (L)
1 - Strongly Disagree (SDA)	1.00 – 1.74	Very Low (VL)

C. Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation Questionnaire. The instrument for determining the level of effectiveness in implementing ISO 21001:2018 was structured around six major constructs: leadership commitment and support; staff competence and training; process standardization and compliance; documentation and records management; communication and awareness; and continuous improvement. It was composed of 60-item statements utilizing a 4-point Likert scale with the following responses: 4 – Strongly Agree (SA), 3 – Agree (A), 2 – Disagree (D), and 1 – Strongly Disagree (SD).

To establish the instrument's validity and reliability, a pilot test was administered to a selected group of respondents outside the main study sample. This ensured that the items were clear, relevant, and aligned with the study objectives. Reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, where a value of 0.70 or above confirmed acceptable internal consistency. With these measures, the instrument was expected to generate accurate and dependable data on the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation in the higher education institution. The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.9564, indicating excellent internal consistency. The following scale was used to determine the level of effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018, as presented on the next page.

Responses	Continuum	Interpretation
4 - Strongly Agree (SA)	3.45 – 4.00	Very Effective (VE)
3 - Agree (A)	2.50 – 3.24	Effective (E)
2 - Disagree (DA)	1.25 – 2.49	Less Effective (LE)
1 - Strongly Disagree (SDA)	1.00 – 1.74	Not Effective (NE)

Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering process began by seeking formal approval from the Graduate School Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Once approval was granted, a letter of permission was forwarded to the institution's school administrator, followed by coordination with department heads to gain access to the identified respondents. This ensured compliance with institutional policies and proper endorsement of the research.

Once permission was obtained, the researcher personally met with respondents to explain the study's purpose, objectives, and significance. Respondents were informed about the questionnaire's constructs, the importance of honest responses, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time.

Questionnaires were then distributed at a designated venue to provide a conducive environment, with approximately 30 minutes allowed for completion. The researcher was available to clarify instructions but did not influence responses to maintain objectivity. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately to ensure completeness.

Collected data were carefully sorted, tabulated, and submitted to a qualified statistician for appropriate descriptive and inferential analysis. The researcher then interpreted the results in relation to the study objectives, variables, and the existing literature, consolidating the findings into the final manuscript, including insights, implications, and recommendations for enhancing leadership support, staff competence, and ISO 21001:2018 implementation in higher education institutions.

Ethical Considerations

Before the study was conducted, approval was sought from the Misamis University Research Ethics Committee (MUREC) to ensure that all research procedures complied with established ethical standards. The

approval from MUREC served as a guarantee that the study upheld the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice in dealing with human participants. Following ethical clearance, the researcher sought institutional permission from the Graduate School Dean, the school administrator, and the department heads to formally conduct the study. All identified respondents were fully informed of the study's purpose, objectives, scope, and significance through an orientation session. They were provided with an informed consent form that clearly outlined their voluntary participation, the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, and the assurance that there were no risks or harm in answering the questionnaire. Only those who signed the consent form were included as participants.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. The names of the respondents and the institution did not appear in any part of the report; instead, codes were used to protect their identities. All data collected were securely stored and were accessible only to the researcher and the statistician. The results were reported in aggregate form to ensure that no individual response could be traced back to a specific participant. After the study was completed, all raw data were properly disposed of to further protect participant privacy. Through these measures, the researcher ensured that ethical standards were upheld, thereby protecting the rights, welfare, and dignity of all respondents who participated in the study.

To ensure the study's trustworthiness, several criteria were observed, including credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was established through accurate representation of respondents' answers and careful interpretation of data. Dependability was ensured through a systematic, well-documented research process, which allowed consistent findings. Confirmability was maintained by minimizing researcher bias and ensuring that the findings were grounded in the collected data. Transferability was supported by providing sufficient contextual details, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar settings.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were organized, processed, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to address the research objectives and questions of the study.

Weighted Mean & Standard Deviation. These tools were used to analyze the data by computing the average responses of the participants on leadership support, staff competence, and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation, as well as determining the extent of variation in their responses to show the consistency or dispersion of the data.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r). This statistical tool was employed to test the relationships between leadership support, staff competence, and ISO implementation effectiveness. Pearson r helped determine whether significant associations existed among the study variables, providing insight into how leadership and staff competence were related to successful ISO implementation.

Multiple Regression Analysis. This method was used to analyze the data by determining how leadership support and staff competence predict the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation and which of these variables has a significant influence on the outcome.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Support Provided by Middle-Level Managers

Table 1 presents the extent of effectiveness in implementing ISO 21001:2018 across key areas, including leadership commitment and support, staff competence and training, process standardization and compliance, and documentation and records management. The findings reveal a weighted mean of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 0.0896, interpreted as Very Adequate. This result indicates that the institution demonstrates a generally strong implementation of ISO 21001:2018, reflecting its commitment to maintaining quality educational management systems. The overall effectiveness suggests that the institution has aligned its processes with international standards to improve educational outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction.

Further analysis of the data shows that *Vision and Strategic Direction* obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.49, indicating that this area is the most effectively implemented among the domains assessed. This suggests that the institution places strong emphasis on this component, ensuring its consistent application in practice. On the other hand, *Resources Provision and Capacity Building* recorded the lowest weighted mean of 3.28, which still falls within the Adequate level of support for middle-level managers. This implies that while the area is implemented, there may be aspects that require further enhancement to achieve optimal effectiveness.

The findings imply that strong implementation in areas such as leadership commitment and staff competence contributes significantly to the overall effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018. Leadership plays a critical role in ensuring that policies, objectives, and resources align with institutional goals. In contrast, staff competence ensures that personnel are adequately trained and capable of executing standardized processes. Meanwhile, lower ratings in certain areas may indicate gaps in consistency, monitoring, or documentation practices. These variations highlight the need for continuous improvement mechanisms to sustain and strengthen all implementation domains.

These findings are supported by the existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of leadership, staff competence, and process standardization in quality management systems. Effective leadership in educational institutions promotes a culture of accountability and quality, which is essential for the successful implementation of standards. Kivistö et al. (2020) noted that without strong leadership commitment, quality assurance systems in higher education may remain superficial. Furthermore, Sallis and Edward (2021) emphasized that structured systems, continuous monitoring, and staff involvement are critical in achieving total quality management in education. In addition, the International Organization for Standardization (2018) highlights that competence, documentation, and continuous evaluation are essential components in ensuring the effectiveness of management systems.

The findings suggest that educational institutions can benefit from maintaining leadership engagement while continuously improving staff development programs and documentation practices. Strengthening weaker areas, particularly in process standardization and record management, can further improve institutional efficiency and compliance with ISO 21001 standards. Moreover, continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be institutionalized to ensure long-term effectiveness and adaptability. Improving these areas will contribute to better educational service delivery, increased stakeholder satisfaction, and the achievement of institutional excellence.

Table 1 Level of Support Provided by Middle-Level Managers

Constructs	Weighted Mean	StDev	Interpretation
Vision and Strategic Direction	3.49	0.4206	Very Adequate
Resources Provision and Capacity Building	3.28	0.4326	Very Adequate
Communication and Engagement	3.34	0.4317	Very Adequate
Monitoring, Recognition and Continuous Improvement	3.34	0.4684	Very Adequate
Overall Weighted Mean	3.36	0.0896	Very Adequate

Legend: 3.26-4.00 – Very Adequate (VA) 1.76-2.50 – Less Adequate (LA)
2.51-3.25 – Adequate (A) 1.00-1.75 – Not Adequate (NA)

Level of Staff Competence in Carrying Out ISO 21001:2018

Table 2 presents the level of staff competence in carrying out ISO 21001:2018 across four key constructs: knowledge and understanding of ISO standards, skills and technical proficiency, training and professional

development, and attitudes and work values. The results reveal an overall weighted mean of 3.39 (SD = 0.1372), interpreted as Very High (VH). This indicates that, in general, staff demonstrate a high level of competence in implementing ISO 21001:2018 standards within the institution. The low standard deviation further suggests consistency in responses, reflecting a shared perception among respondents regarding staff capability and preparedness to execute quality management practices.

A closer examination of the individual constructs shows that attitudes and work values obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.58 (SD = 0.4349), indicating that staff exhibit strong professional values, commitment, and positive work attitudes in implementing ISO standards. This is followed by skills and technical proficiency (WM = 3.39, SD = 0.4568) and knowledge and understanding of ISO standards (WM = 3.36, SD = 0.4203), both interpreted as very high. In contrast, training and professional development received the lowest weighted mean of 3.25 (SD = 0.5081), interpreted as High (H). While still within an acceptable level, this suggests that training-related aspects may require further strengthening to match the higher levels observed in other domains. Training and professional development are crucial for non-teaching personnel, as they offer continuous opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills, and understanding of work processes, particularly in relation to ISO 21001:2018 standards. Through regular training, staff become more confident and efficient in performing their duties, including proper documentation, adherence to procedures, and support for institutional quality goals. It also helps them stay up to date on changes to policies and systems within the institution. Overall, strengthening training and professional development enhances the competence, adaptability, and effectiveness of non-teaching personnel in delivering quality work.

The findings suggest that staff competence in ISO 21001:2018 implementation is strongly influenced by positive attitudes and work values, which appear to drive effective performance and adherence to quality standards. The high ratings in knowledge and skills further indicate that staff possess the necessary cognitive and technical capabilities to perform their roles effectively. However, the relatively lower rating in training and professional development may imply gaps in continuous learning opportunities, access to updated training programs, or institutional support for professional growth. This highlights the need for sustained capacity-building initiatives to ensure that staff competencies remain current and responsive to evolving standards.

These findings are supported by the literature, which emphasizes the critical role of staff competence and continuous development in quality management systems. According to the International Organization for Standardization (2018), competence, awareness, and training are fundamental requirements for the effective implementation of ISO-based management systems. Kivistö and Pekkola (2020) highlighted that staff competence and institutional support for professional development significantly influence the success of quality assurance initiatives in higher education. Moreover, Sallis (2021) emphasized that continuous training and staff engagement are essential in sustaining a culture of quality and organizational excellence. In addition, Harvey and Williams (2020) underscored that effective staff development programs enhance both individual performance and institutional outcomes in quality-driven environments.

The findings indicate that while staff generally demonstrate high competence, there is still value in continuously strengthening training and professional development programs to support ongoing improvement. By investing in targeted, up-to-date training and fostering a supportive organizational culture, institutions can ensure staff remain capable and prepared for evolving ISO standards. Overall, enhancing staff competence in this way contributes not only to more effective ISO 21001:2018 implementation but also to improved educational quality and greater confidence in the institution's performance.

Table 2 Level of Staff Competence in Carrying Out ISO 21001:2018

Constructs	Weighted Mean	StDev	Interpretation
Knowledge and Understanding of ISO Standards	3.36	0.4203	Very High
Skills and Technical Proficiency	3.39	0.4568	Very High

Training and Professional Development	3.25	0.5081	High
Attitudes and Work Values	3.58	0.4349	Very High
Overall Weighted Mean	3.39	0.1372	Very High

Legend: 3.26-4.00 – *Very High (VH)* 1.76-2.50 – *Low (L)*
 2.51-3.25 – *High (H)* 1.00-1.75 – *Very Low (VL)*

Extent of Implementation ISO 21001:2018

Table 3 presents the extent of ISO 21001:2018 implementation across six key areas: leadership commitment and support, staff competence and training, process standardization and compliance, documentation and record management, communication and awareness, and continuous improvement. The results show an overall weighted mean of 3.26 (SD = 0.0454), interpreted as a Great Extent (GE). This indicates that the institution has effectively implemented ISO 21001:2018 across its major operational domains. The relatively low standard deviation reflects consistent responses, suggesting a shared perception of the level of implementation. The findings demonstrate strong adherence to quality management principles within the institution's educational processes.

A closer examination of the individual constructs reveals that leadership commitment and support obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.30 (SD = 0.0308), indicating a Very Great Extent (VGE). This highlights the critical role of leadership in driving the effective implementation of ISO 21001:2018. In contrast, staff competence and training recorded the lowest weighted mean of 3.18 (SD = 0.0388), although still within the GE range. The remaining areas, process standardization and compliance (WM = 3.27), documentation and record management (WM = 3.29), communication and awareness (WM = 3.24), and continuous improvement (WM = 3.29), also fall within the GE category, indicating a generally consistent level of implementation across functional areas.

These findings indicate that leadership commitment is a key driver of the successful implementation of ISO 21001:2018, as effective leadership facilitates alignment with institutional goals, ensures resource allocation, and reinforces quality standards. The high rating in this area suggests that administrators are actively engaged in promoting and sustaining quality initiatives. On the other hand, the comparatively lower score in staff competence and training points to opportunities for strengthening capacity-building efforts. While the overall implementation remains strong, these variations suggest the need for targeted improvements to achieve a more balanced level of execution across all domains.

The results are supported by the literature, which emphasizes the importance of leadership and staff development in quality management systems. According to the International Organization for Standardization (2018), leadership plays a central role in establishing direction and sustaining management systems. More recent studies affirm that leadership engagement and governance structures influence the effectiveness of quality assurance practices in higher education (Kivistö & Pekkola, 2020). In addition, continuous professional development and staff involvement have been identified as essential components in sustaining quality improvement and organizational performance (Sallis, 2021). Furthermore, effective communication, documentation, and staff development remain critical to strengthening quality assurance systems in educational institutions (Harvey & Williams, 2020).

The implications of these findings suggest that while the institution demonstrates a strong level of ISO 21001:2018 implementation, further enhancement of staff competence and training initiatives remains necessary. Expanding continuous professional development programs, strengthening capacity-building activities, and updating training modules may enhance staff capability and engagement. At the same time, sustaining leadership involvement and reinforcing communication and documentation practices may help ensure long-term effectiveness. Addressing these areas can support the institution in achieving implementation across all domains to a great extent, thereby improving overall educational quality and organizational performance.

Table 3

Extent of Implementation ISO 21001:2018

Constructs	Weighted Mean	StDev	Interpretation
Leadership Commitment and Support	3.30	0.0308	Very Great Extent
Staff Competence and Training	3.18	0.0388	Great Extent
Process Standardization and Compliance	3.27	0.0379	Very Great Extent
Documentation and Record Management	3.29	0.0364	Very Great Extent
Communication and Awareness	3.24	0.0381	Great Extent
Continuous Improvement	3.29	0.0389	Very Great Extent
Overall Weighted Mean	3.26	0.0454	Very Great Extent

Legend: 3.26-4.00 – Very Great Extent (VGE) 1.76-2.50 –Moderate Extent (ME)

2.51-3.25 – Great Extent (GE) 1.00-1.75 – Little Extent (LE)

Significant Relationship between the Middle-Level Managers' Leadership Support and the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation

Table 4 presents the relationship between middle-level managers' leadership support and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation across key areas, including leadership commitment and training, staff competence, process standardization, documentation, communication, and continuous improvement. The results reveal that all correlation coefficients range from 0.500 to 0.778, indicating moderate to strong positive relationships. In addition, all p-values are less than 0.001, which means that the relationships are highly significant. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected in all cases. These findings clearly suggest that stronger leadership support from middle-level managers is associated with more effective implementation of ISO 21001:2018.

A closer look at the data shows that the **strongest relationship** is between *monitoring, recognition, and continuous improvement* ($r_s = 0.778$). This suggests that when managers actively monitor performance, recognize staff efforts, and promote ongoing improvement, the institution's ability to sustain continuous improvement practices is greatly strengthened. On the other hand, the **lowest correlation** is found between *resource provision and capacity building* and *documentation and record management* ($r_s = 0.500$). Although this relationship remains significant, it suggests that providing resources alone may not be sufficient to fully strengthen documentation practices, possibly because these resources are used differently.

The findings highlight that leadership support is a key factor in the successful implementation of ISO 21001:2018. Leadership practices such as setting a clear direction, providing adequate resources, maintaining open communication, and encouraging continuous improvement all contribute to better implementation outcomes. The consistent significant relationships across all areas show that leadership influences multiple aspects of organizational performance. In general, stronger, more proactive leadership tends to result in higher effectiveness.

Previous studies support these findings. Kivistö and Pekkola (2020) emphasized that leadership plays a central role in the effectiveness of quality assurance systems in higher education. Similarly, Tony Bush (2020) highlighted that effective leadership improves organizational performance by providing clear direction and empowering staff. Edward Sallis (2021) also noted that leadership commitment and continuous improvement

are essential elements of total quality management. In addition, the International Organization for Standardization (2018) identifies leadership as a core principle in the successful implementation of management systems.

These results can be explained using Transformational Leadership Theory, originally introduced by James MacGregor Burns and later expanded by Bernard Bass. This theory emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating employees, promoting a shared vision, and supporting their development. These ideas align with the study's results, which show that strong leadership support is linked to better implementation outcomes.

In terms of implications, the findings suggest that institutions aiming to improve ISO 21001:2018 implementation should focus on strengthening leadership practices at the middle-management level. This may include providing leadership development programs, improving monitoring and evaluation systems, and promoting a culture that values recognition and continuous improvement. At the same time, improving how resources are allocated and used may help enhance areas such as documentation and record management. Strengthening leadership across these areas can lead to more effective implementation and better overall organizational performance.

Table 4

Significant Relationship between the Middle-Level Managers' Leadership Support and the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation

Variables		Leadership Commitment and Training	Staff Competence and Training	Process Standardization and Compliance	Documentation and Record Management	Communication and Awareness	Continuous Improvement
Vision and Strategic Direction	r_s	0.650***	0.575***	0.626***	0.522***	0.611***	0.658***
	p	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
	I	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho
Resources Provision and Capacity Building	r_s	0.709***	0.675***	0.539***	0.500***	0.609***	0.677***
	P	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
	I	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	RejectHo	RejectHo	Reject Ho
Communication and Engagement	r_s	0.729***	0.680***	0.647***	0.646***	0.711***	0.768***
	P	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
	I	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho
Monitoring, Recognition and Continuous Improvement	r_s	0.751***	0.707***	0.636***	0.590***	0.664***	0.778***
	p	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
	I	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the middle-level managers' leadership support and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

*P value Scale: *** $p < .001$ (Highly Significant); ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not significant)*

Significant Relationship between the Staff Competence and the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation

Table 5 presents the relationship between staff competence and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation across key areas, including leadership commitment and training, staff competence and training, process standardization and compliance, documentation and record management, communication and awareness, and continuous improvement. The results show that the correlation coefficients range from **0.166 to 0.501**, indicating **weak to moderate positive relationships**. Most p-values are less than 0.001, indicating that the relationships are statistically significant. However, one relationship between *skills and technical proficiency* and *leadership commitment and training* ($p = 0.068$) is not significant, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis for this specific case. Overall, the findings suggest that staff competence is generally associated with the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

A closer look at the results shows that the **strongest relationship** is between *knowledge and understanding of ISO standards, documentation, and record management* ($r_s = 0.501$). This suggests that when staff have a solid understanding of ISO standards, they are better able to maintain accurate, organized documentation. On the other hand, the **weakest relationship** is between *skills and technical proficiency* and *leadership commitment and training* ($r_s = 0.166$), which is not statistically significant. This implies that technical skills alone may not directly influence leadership-related aspects of ISO implementation.

The findings highlight that staff competence, particularly knowledge, training, skills, and attitudes, plays an important role in supporting ISO 21001:2018 implementation. Among these, knowledge of ISO standards stands out as a key factor, especially in ensuring proper documentation and compliance. In addition, positive attitudes and ongoing training consistently contribute across different areas, suggesting that both capability and the willingness to perform tasks are important. At the same time, the weaker relationship in some areas indicates that competence alone may not be enough and should be supported by effective leadership, structured systems, and proper application in practice.

Previous studies support these findings. Raymond Noe (2020) emphasized that employee training and development improve both individual and organizational performance. Eduardo Salas et al. (2021) also highlighted that well-designed training programs enhance competencies and overall system effectiveness. In addition, the International Organization for Standardization (2018) identifies competence, awareness, and training as essential elements in the successful implementation of management systems.

These results can be explained using Human Capital Theory, developed by Gary Becker (1993), which emphasizes that knowledge, skills, and competencies are valuable assets that improve organizational performance. The theory supports the idea that investing in training and professional development leads to better efficiency and effectiveness within institutions.

The implications of these findings suggest that institutions can improve ISO 21001:2018 implementation by strengthening staff competence through continuous professional development, targeted training programs, and competency-based approaches. Enhancing staff knowledge of ISO standards, improving technical skills, and promoting positive work attitudes can contribute to better outcomes. At the same time, aligning training with actual workplace practices may help maximize its impact. By investing in staff development, institutions can further strengthen implementation effectiveness and overall quality performance.

Table 5

Significant Relationship between the Staff Competence Support and the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation

Variables		Leadership Commitment and Training	Staff Competence and Training	Process Standardization and Compliance	Documentation and Record Management	Communication and Awareness	Continuous Improvement
	r_s	0.347***	0.433***	0.468***	0.501***	0.479***	0.435***

Knowledge Understanding Standards of ISO	p	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
	I	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho
Skills and Technical Proficiency	r_s	0.166	0.327***	0.351***	0.462***	0.419***	0.271**
	P	0.068	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.003
	I	Accept Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho
Training and Professional Development	r_s	0.271**	0.457	0.361***	0.410***	0.361***	0.251**
	P	0.003	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.005
	I	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho
Attitudes	r_s	0.275**	0.300***	0.386***	0.413***	0.337***	0.335***
	p	0.002	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
	I	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho	Reject Ho

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the staff competence and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

*P value Scale: *** $p < .001$ (Highly Significant); ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not significant)*

Predictors on the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation

Table 6 presents the regression analysis identifying the predictors of ISO 21001:2018 implementation effectiveness, particularly in terms of continuous improvement. The model includes communication and engagement, attitudes and work values, and knowledge and understanding of ISO standards as independent variables. The results show that attitudes and work values ($\beta = 0.4232$, $p = 0.00$) and knowledge and understanding of ISO standards ($\beta = 0.2273$, $p = 0.00$) are statistically significant predictors. In contrast, communication and engagement ($\beta = 0.259$, $p = 0.01$) is also significant at the 0.05 level. The regression model explains 65.37% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.6537$), indicating substantial explanatory power in determining the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

Among the predictors, attitudes and work values emerged as the strongest predictors, with the highest coefficient and t-value ($t = 4.27$), indicating that employees' positive attitudes, commitment, and professional values play a central role in driving continuous improvement. This is followed by knowledge and understanding of ISO standards ($t = 3.82$), emphasizing the importance of cognitive competence in effective implementation. Meanwhile, communication and engagement ($t = 2.41$) showed meaningful but comparatively lower predictive strength. This suggests that while communication facilitates coordination, internal dispositions and knowledge may exert a more direct influence on sustaining continuous improvement practices.

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation is largely shaped by human factors, particularly employees' attitudes, values, and level of understanding of quality management standards. Positive work values promote commitment and accountability, which are essential in maintaining continuous improvement initiatives. Similarly, a strong knowledge base enables staff to apply standards accurately and consistently. While communication and engagement support alignment and collaboration, their effectiveness is enhanced when strong internal competencies support them. Overall, both behavioral and

cognitive dimensions of staff competence play an important role in sustaining quality management practices.

These findings are supported by existing literature. Noe (2020) emphasized that employee knowledge, skills, and training are closely linked to improved performance and organizational effectiveness. Salas et al. (2021) highlighted that competencies, teamwork, and engagement contribute to system-level performance and organizational outcomes. In addition, the International Organization for Standardization (2018) identifies competence, awareness, and communication as essential elements in sustaining effective management systems.

These results can be anchored in the Theory of Planned Behavior, developed by Icek Ajzen (2020), which posits that attitudes influence intentions and, ultimately, behavior. In this context, positive attitudes and work values shape employees' commitment to quality practices and continuous improvement. The findings are also supported by Human Capital Theory, advanced by Gary S. Becker (1993), which emphasizes that knowledge and competencies are key drivers of organizational performance and effectiveness.

The implications of these findings suggest that institutions aiming to enhance the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation may focus on strengthening employees' attitudes and work values, improving knowledge of ISO standards, and fostering effective communication practices. Initiatives such as values formation programs, continuous professional development, and staff engagement strategies may contribute to improved organizational outcomes. Integrating these predictors into institutional policies and development programs may further support sustained continuous improvement and long-term quality assurance. Strengthening both the behavioral and cognitive aspects of staff development can contribute to more effective and resilient educational management systems.

Table 6

Predictors on the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation

Term	Coef	SE Coef	T-Value	P-Value
Constant	0.254	0.224	1.14	0.259
Communication and Engagement	0.259	0.107	2.41	0.01
Attitudes and Work Values	0.4232	0.0991	4.27	0.00
Knowledge and Understanding of ISO Standards	0.2273	0.2273	3.82	0.00

Regression Equation			
Continuous Improvement = 0.254 + 0.259 communication and engagement + 0.4232 attitudes and work values + 0.2273 knowledge and understanding of ISO standards			
Model Summary			
S	R-sq	R-sq(adj)	R-sq(pred)
0.255304	65.37%	4.48%	62.42%

Ho: There is no predictors on the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study aimed to understand how middle-level managers' leadership support and staff competence contributed to the successful Implementation of ISO 21001:2018. 1) What is the level of leadership support provided by middle-level managers during the Implementation of ISO 21001:2018 in terms of vision and strategic direction, resource provision and capacity building, communication and engagement, and monitoring, recognition, and continuous improvement?, 2) What is the level of staff competence in carrying out ISO 21001:2018 in terms of their knowledge and understanding of ISO standards, their skills and technical proficiency, the training and professional development they receive, and their attitudes and work values?, 3) To what extent is the Implementation of ISO 21001:2018 effective particularly in the areas of leadership commitment and support, staff competence and training, process standardization and compliance, documentation and record management, communication and awareness, and continuous improvement?, 4) Is there a significant relationship between the middle-level managers' leadership support and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation?, 5) Is there a significant relationship between the staff competence and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation?, 6) Which variables significantly predict the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation?

The study used a descriptive-correlational design to examine and describe the relationships among variables without establishing causation. It was conducted in a private higher education institution in Ozamiz City, Philippines, with all non-teaching personnel as respondents. Total population sampling was employed, including all qualified individuals, to ensure comprehensive representation. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed questionnaire comprising three parts: Leadership Support, Staff Competence, and Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation.

The collected data were organized, processed, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to address the research objectives. Weighted Mean was used to determine the levels of the key variables, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was used to examine relationships among variables, and Multiple Regression Analysis was applied to identify predictive influences.

Findings

The following are the finding of the study:

1. Middle-level managers provided very adequate support to staff in the implementation of ISO 21001:2018.
2. Staff demonstrated very high level competence in the implementation of ISO 21001:2018.
3. ISO 21001:2018 was implemented to a very great extent.
4. There was a significant relationship between middle-level managers' leadership support and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.
5. There was a significant relationship between staff competence and the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.
6. The results show that attitudes and work values, knowledge and understanding of ISO standards, and communication and engagement are significant predictors.

Conclusions

The following are the conclusion of the study:

1. The implementation of ISO 21001:2018 is effectively supported by middle-level managers through their leadership and guidance.
2. The high level of staff competence contributes to the effective implementation of ISO 21001:2018.
3. ISO 21001:2018 is being implemented successfully by the colleges/departments.

4. Middle-level managers' leadership support has a direct influence on the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.
5. Staff competence has a direct influence on the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.
6. Attitudes and work values, knowledge and understanding of ISO standards, and communication and engagement are key factors influencing the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

Recommendations

The following are recommendation of the study:

1. Top management may continue supporting middle-level managers by providing opportunities for leadership development, clearer guidance on their roles, and regular feedback. This will help strengthen how ISO 21001:2018 is implemented across the institution.
2. The Human Resource and Quality Assurance offices may continue to enhance staff competence by offering regular training, skills development sessions, and opportunities for ISO-related learning or certification, so that staff can further build on their already high level competence.
3. School administrators and quality assurance teams may maintain the strong implementation of ISO 21001:2018 by consistently monitoring processes, encouraging compliance, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement in all departments.
4. School administrators, including department heads and middle-level managers, may further improve their leadership support by maintaining open communication with staff, actively engaging them in decision-making, and recognizing their efforts to sustain motivation and effective implementation.
5. Institutions may continue investing in staff development through structured training programs, mentoring, and regular skills assessment to ensure that employees remain competent and aligned with ISO standards.
6. School administrators and quality assurance offices may strengthen important factors such as work values, ISO awareness, and communication by promoting awareness activities, values formation, and collaborative efforts that support a positive working environment.
7. Future researchers may explore other factors that could influence ISO 21001:2018 implementation or use different research approaches, such as mixed methods or long-term studies, to gain deeper understanding of its sustainability in higher education institutions.

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Appendix A

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response by checking (✓) the column that best reflects your level of agreement. Your honest responses are highly valued and will be treated with strict confidentiality. Be guided by the following scale in answering the items:

4 - Strongly Agree (SA)

3 - Agree (A)

2 - Disagree (D)

1 - Strongly Disagree (SD)

Indicators	Responses			
	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
A. Vision and Strategic Direction				
1. The administrators clearly articulate the institution's mission, vision, and goals.				
2. Leadership provides a clear strategic direction aligned with ISO standards.				
3. Staff are well informed about the institution's quality objectives.				
4. The institution's leadership sets measurable targets for continuous improvement.				
5. Strategic plans are regularly updated and communicated to all stakeholders.				
6. Administrators align decision-making processes with institutional goals and priorities.				
7. Leaders encourage staff to align their individual roles with organizational objectives.				
8. Leadership demonstrates commitment to long-term institutional development.				
9. Policies and guidelines are consistent with the vision and mission of the institution.				
10. The strategic direction of the institution reflects global standards and best practices.				
B. Resource Provision and Capacity Building				
1. Administrators allocate sufficient financial resources for ISO implementation.				
2. Adequate facilities and equipment are provided to support quality processes.				
3. Leadership ensures access to updated learning resources and technology.				
4. Training programs are regularly conducted to enhance staff competence.				

5. Staff are provided with opportunities for professional development.				
6. Leaders support attendance in seminars, workshops, and conferences.				
7. Resources are allocated fairly and equitably across departments.				
8. Adequate staffing is ensured to meet academic and administrative demands.				
9. Investment in infrastructure supports the institution's continuous improvement goals.				
10. Leadership responds promptly to resource requests essential for ISO compliance.				
C. Communications and Engagement				
1. Leadership maintains open communication channels with staff.				
2. Administrators regularly conduct meetings to discuss institutional plans.				
3. Feedback from staff is valued and considered in decision-making.				
4. Leadership ensures transparency in disseminating information.				
5. Staff are encouraged to actively participate in ISO-related initiatives.				
6. Administrators foster a culture of collaboration and teamwork.				
7. Communication regarding policies and guidelines is clear and timely.				
8. Leadership encourages suggestions for process improvement.				
9. Effective communication enhances staff motivation and morale.				
10. Stakeholders are engaged in discussions regarding institutional development.				
D. Monitoring, Recognition, and Continuous Improvement				
1. Leadership regularly monitors the implementation of ISO processes.				
2. Institutional performance is assessed through systematic evaluation.				
3. Administrators recognize outstanding staff contributions.				
4. Leadership provides constructive feedback to improve staff performance.				
5. Continuous improvement initiatives are consistently pursued.				
6. Leaders ensure compliance with ISO standards through periodic reviews.				
7. Recognition programs motivate staff to improve their work.				
8. Evaluation results are communicated to staff for process enhancement.				
9. Corrective measures are implemented when gaps are identified.				
10. Leadership fosters a culture of innovation and quality improvement.				

Appendix B

STAFF COMPETENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response by checking (✓) the column that best reflects your level of agreement. Your honest responses are highly valued and will be treated with strict confidentiality. Use the following scale in answering the items:

4 – Strongly Agree (SA)

3 – Agree (A)

2 – Disagree (D)

1 – Strongly Disagree (SD)

Indicators	Responses			
	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
A. Knowledge and Understanding of ISO Standards				
1. I am knowledgeable about the basic principles of ISO 21001:2018.				
2. I understand the importance of ISO standards in quality assurance.				
3. I am familiar with the institution's ISO quality policies and objectives.				
4. I know how ISO standards guide institutional processes and services.				
5. I understand my role in ensuring compliance with ISO requirements.				
6. I can explain the purpose of ISO documentation and record-keeping.				
7. I am aware of the procedures required to maintain ISO certification.				
8. I understand the relevance of ISO in promoting continuous improvement.				
9. I know how ISO standards contribute to service delivery and efficiency.				
10. I am updated on ISO-related developments within the institution.				
B. Skills and Technical Proficiency				
1. I can effectively apply ISO guidelines in my daily work.				
2. I am able to follow documented procedures and protocols.				
3. I can properly prepare and maintain ISO-related documentation.				
4. I am capable of using tools and resources necessary for ISO compliance.				
5. I demonstrate accuracy and efficiency in performing my tasks.				
6. I am confident in troubleshooting problems related to ISO processes.				
7. I am skilled at collaborating with colleagues in ISO implementation.				
8. I can adapt to changes in procedures brought about by ISO requirements.				
9. I can contribute to process improvements aligned with ISO standards.				
10. I can perform my duties with minimal supervision while meeting ISO requirements.				
C. Training and Professional Development				
1. I have attended orientations or seminars about ISO 21001:2018.				
2. The institution provides sufficient training opportunities related to ISO.				
3. I actively participate in workshops that enhance my competence.				
4. I regularly update my knowledge through professional development activities.				

5. Training programs have helped me understand ISO processes better.				
6. I seek opportunities to improve my skills related to ISO compliance.				
7. The institution encourages continuous learning among staff.				
8. I apply new knowledge and skills gained from training to my work.				
9. I am provided with resources to pursue professional growth.				
10. I am committed to lifelong learning to remain competent in ISO practices.				
D. Attitudes and Work Values				
1. I am committed to supporting the institution's ISO implementation.				
2. I value discipline and responsibility in performing my tasks.				
3. I demonstrate punctuality and consistency in my work.				
4. I take pride in complying with ISO quality standards.				
5. I willingly cooperate with colleagues to achieve ISO objectives.				
6. I value accountability in ensuring quality service delivery.				
7. I maintain a positive attitude toward continuous improvement.				
8. I respect organizational policies and procedures under ISO standards.				
9. I take initiative to suggest improvements in work processes.				
10. I uphold integrity and honesty in accomplishing my responsibilities.				

Appendix C

EFFECTIVENESS OF ISO 21001:2018 IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding the implementation of ISO 21001:2018 in your institution. Use the scale below:

4 – Strongly Agree (SA)

3 – Agree (A)

2 – Disagree (D)

1 – Strongly Disagree (SD)

Indicators	Responses			
	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
A. Leadership Commitment and Support				
1. Top management provides a clear vision and direction for ISO 21001:2018 implementation.				
2. Leaders allocate sufficient resources to support quality management initiatives.				
3. Administrators regularly communicate the importance of ISO standards to staff.				

4. Leadership actively participates in ISO planning and review meetings.				
5. Managers encourage staff involvement in quality improvement initiatives.				
6. Recognition is given to staff who contribute to ISO compliance and improvement.				
7. Leaders demonstrate accountability for ISO implementation outcomes.				
8. Administrators provide guidance and mentoring to ensure ISO processes are followed.				
9. Top management sets realistic and measurable quality objectives.				
10. Continuous improvement is reinforced as a priority by leadership.				
B. Staff Competence and Training				
1. Staff have adequate knowledge of ISO 21001:2018 requirements.				
2. Employees receive sufficient training to perform their roles in compliance with ISO standards.				
3. Training programs are updated to meet evolving ISO requirements.				
4. Staff demonstrate technical proficiency in carrying out ISO-related tasks.				
5. Professional development opportunities are provided to enhance ISO competence.				
6. Employees understand how their roles contribute to quality objectives.				
7. Staff training is regularly evaluated for effectiveness.				
8. ISO training sessions include practical, hands-on activities.				
9. Staff attitudes reflect commitment to ISO quality standards.				
10. Employees are encouraged to pursue continuous learning relevant to ISO implementation.				
C. Process Standardization and Compliance				
1. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are clearly documented for all key processes.				
2. Staff strictly adhere to established ISO procedures.				
3. Internal audits are conducted to ensure compliance with ISO 21001:2018.				
4. Quality standards are consistently applied across departments.				
5. Process deviations are immediately addressed and corrected.				
6. Staff demonstrate awareness of compliance requirements in daily tasks.				
7. Corrective and preventive actions are systematically implemented.				
8. Process reviews are regularly conducted to maintain compliance.				
9. Compliance with ISO standards is monitored by designated officers.				
10. Staff are held accountable for adherence to standardized processes.				
D. Documentation and Record Management				
1. Documentation of ISO procedures is clear and accessible to staff.				
2. Records are consistently maintained in accordance with ISO requirements.				
3. Document control procedures are properly implemented.				

4. Staff receive training on proper documentation practices.				
5. Document revisions are communicated promptly to concerned staff.				
6. Records are regularly updated to reflect current practices.				
7. Document management systems support accuracy and reliability of records.				
8. Staff can easily retrieve documents when needed.				
9. Documentation errors are promptly corrected.				
10. Proper documentation supports decision-making and quality assurance.				
E. Communication and Awareness				
1. Management communicates ISO policies effectively to all employees.				
2. Staff are regularly updated on ISO compliance requirements.				
3. Information about ISO objectives is shared across all departments.				
4. Staff are encouraged to give feedback on ISO processes.				
5. Regular meetings or briefings are held to discuss ISO implementation.				
6. Employees understand the importance of ISO in improving service quality.				
7. Communication channels for ISO-related concerns are clear and open.				
8. Success stories of ISO implementation are shared with staff.				
9. Staff are aware of their individual responsibilities in ISO compliance.				
10. Internal communication supports transparency in ISO initiatives.				
F. Continuous Improvement				
1. The organization regularly evaluates processes for improvement opportunities.				
2. Staff are encouraged to suggest changes to improve quality.				
3. Lessons learned from audits are applied to strengthen ISO compliance.				
4. Continuous improvement is integrated into daily operations.				
5. Performance indicators are used to monitor improvement progress.				
6. Employees are involved in problem-solving for process enhancement.				
7. Best practices are documented and shared across the organization.				
8. Improvement initiatives are supported with necessary resources.				
9. Staff recognize continuous improvement as part of the organizational culture.				
10. Management consistently acts on feedback to enhance ISO performance.				



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(PORMA SA NASABTAN NGA PAGTUGOT)

Name of the Researcher/Investigator

(Nagtuon): Mary Lord V. Mernelo

Course: Master in Business Administration

College: Graduate School Department

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Thesis Title: “Leadership Support and Staff Competence on the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation in a Private Higher Education Institution”

PART I. INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction

(Pasiuna)

Good day! I am Mary Lord V. Mernelo, the principal researcher/investigator of the study entitled “Leadership Support and Staff Competence on the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation in a Private Higher Education Institution.” I am a graduate student under the program Master in Business Administration at Misamis University in Ozamiz City. I am to conduct the research with Non-Teaching Personnel as participant. In this vein, I am respectfully seeking your voluntary participation, being qualified to give your informed consent to take part in this study. Before you decide whether to participate or not in this study, please read the succeeding information about the study and feel free to ask questions anytime should there be anything you do not understand or want to clarify. If you agree to answer the interview, you will be asked to affix your name and signature on this form for which you will be given a copy.

(Maayong adlaw! Ako si Mary Lord V. Mernelo, ang nagpahigayon sa pagtuon kabahin sa “Leadership Support and Staff Competence on the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation in a Private Higher Education Institution.” Ako usa ka estudyante sa Master in Business Administration sa Misamis University, Ozamiz City. Ako nagapili kanimo isip participant nga maoy mutubag sa gikinahanglang impormasyon niining gihimong pagtuon. Ako matinahurong naghango sa inyong bulontaryo nga pag-apil niini nga pagtuon. Gikinahanglan nga ikaw naa sa saktong edad ug naay kakayahan nga mohatag sa pagtugot aron makaapil niini nga pagtuon. Sa dili pa ka mohukom sa pag-apil niini nga interview, palihug sa pagbasa sa mga impormasyon sa ubos ug gawason ka nga makapangutana kon

	<i>adunay wala nimo nasabtan o gusto nimong iklaro. Kung motugot ka sa pagahimoon nga interview, papirmahon ka niini nga porma ug tagaan usab ka ug imong kaugalingong kopya.</i>
Purpose (<i>Katuyoan</i>)	The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of ISO 21001:2018 in the institution, particularly in terms of management practices, service delivery, and continuous quality improvement in education. This study also aims to examine the experiences and perceptions of personnel regarding the implementation of the management system. This research is significant as it provides a basis for improving educational management practices, strengthening quality assurance mechanisms, and enhancing the efficiency of institutional operations. (<i>Ang katuyuan niini nga pagtuon mao ang pagtino sa pagka-epektibo sa pagtuman sa ISO 21001:2018 sa institusyon, ilabi na sa mga pamaagi sa pagdumala, serbisyo ug padayon nga pagpaayo sa kalidad sa edukasyon. Gitumong usab niini nga pagtuon ang pagtuki sa kasinatian ug panan-aw sa mga kawani kabahin sa implementasyon sa maong sistema. Kini nga pagtuon makahatag og basihan sa pagpaayo sa mga pamaagi sa pagdumala sa edukasyon, pagpalig-on sa kalidad nga kasigurohan, ug paglambo sa episyente nga operasyon sa institusyon.</i>)
Type of Research Intervention (<i>Matang sa Interbensyon sa Pagtuon</i>)	This study will be conducted through Google Form. The gathering of data will be collected online, and participants can answer the questionnaire at their own convenience. (<i>Kining pagtuon pagabuhaton pinaagi sa Google Form. Ang datos kolektahon online, u gang mga partisipante mahimong motubag sa questionnaire sa ilang kagustuhan ug oras.</i>)
Selection of Participants (<i>Pagpili sa mga Partisipant</i>)	The selection of the participants is based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) non-teaching personnel of the institution, (2) currently employed for at least 1 year of service, and (3) willing to participate in the study. (<i>Ang mga partisipante niini nga pagtuon mao ang indibidwal nga naga-angkon sa mosunod: (1) mga kawani nga dili magtutudlo sa institusyon, (2) kasamtangang nagtrabaho sulod sa labing menos isa aka tuig, ug (3) buot moapil sa pagtuon.</i>)
Voluntary Participation (<i>Boluntaryo nga Partisipasyon</i>)	Your participation has to be voluntary and will not affect your situation or status in any way, including your relationship with the researcher. You are free to decide if you will take part or not. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions that you do not prefer to answer. (<i>Boluntaryo ang imong pag-apil ug kini dili makaapekto sa imong sitwasyon o estado apil na imong relasyon sa nagtuon. Gawasnon ka nga modesisyon kung kung moapil ka niini nga pagtoon o dili. Kung mo-desisyon ka nga moapil, gawasnon ka nga dili motubag sa bisan asa nga pangutana nga dili nimo gusto nga tubagon.</i>)
Procedure (<i>Pamaagi</i>)	The participants will be given ample time when to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaires will be distributed to the respondents through Google Form link. The researcher will consolidate the responses to be used for the analysis of the data. The information and data provided by you as a participant will be utilized for this study alone and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. (<i>Ang mga partisipante pagahatagan og igong panahon sa pagtubag sa questionnaire. Ang mga questionnaire ipasa sa mga partisipante pinaagi sa Google Form link. Ang mananaliksik</i>

	<i>ang mo-konsolida sa mga tubag aron gamiton sap ag-analisa sa datos. Ang impormasyon ug datos nga imong ihatag isip partisipante gamiton lamang alang sa niini nga pagtuon ug pagatimanon uban sa labing taas nga kompidensyalidad.)</i>
Duration (Gidugayon)	The gathering of data through the Google Form will be allotted approximately 30-45 minutes. <i>(Ang pagkuha sa datos pinaagi sa Google Form mokabat ngadto sa 30 hangtod 45 ka minutos.)</i>
Risks and Discomforts (Risiko ug Kahasol)	The respondents will be protected from physical, social, or economic risks. In case the items in the survey instrument are too personal and make you feel uncomfortable, you may decline to answer any or all questions and may terminate your involvement at any time you choose. <i>(Ang mga partisipante ginaprotektahan sa pisikal, sosyal o ekonomikanhong risiko. Kung pananglitan adunay mga pangutana nga personal ra kaayo o kung dili ka komportable, mamahimong dili ka motubag o mobalibad sa pagtubag sa bisan asa o sa tanang mga pangutana ug moatras sa pag-apil sa bisan unsang panahon nga imong gusto.)</i>
Benefits (Kaayohan)	This study will enable you to shed light or provide understanding about the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation in the institution. Thus, your responses shall be highly valued being deemed important in the field of educational management and quality assurance. <i>(Kini nga pagtuon makapahimo kanimo paghatag og katin-awan o pagpasabot kabahin sa pagka-epektibo sa pagpatuman sa ISO 21001:2018. Ang imong mga tubag hatagan og dakong bili nga giisip nga importante sa linya sa pagdumala sa edukasyon ug kasigurohan sa kalidad.)</i>
Reimbursements (Hulip nga bayad)	There will be no monetary expenses or costs on your part as a respondent, nor any monetary compensation for your participation in this study. However, personal protective equipment (PPE) like face masks, alcohol and face shields may be provided during the gathering of the research data. <i>(Wala kay magasto sa imong pag-apil niini nga pagtuon ug dili usab ka bayaran ug kwarta sa imong pag-apil niini nga pagtuon. Apan adunay nga personal protective equipment (PPE) sama sa face masks, alcohol ug face shields nga pwede nga mahatag sa panahon sa pagkuha sa mga datos)</i>
Confidentiality of Data (Pag-amping sa Datos)	Only the researcher will have access to the information and responses of the participants. The personal identifying information of the participants will only be used for research analysis and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. During the study, all data will be kept in a locked, secure filing cabinet, of which will be discarded 6 months after the publication of the results. <i>(Ang nagtuon lamang ang makakita sa mga impormasyon ug tubag sa respondents. Ang mga datos nga makuha i-analisa ug hatagan og tumang pag-amping aron dili ibutyag. Sa panahon sa pagtuon, ipahimutang sa usa ka selyadong filing cabinet ang tanang datos nga pagagub-on human sa 6 kabulan gikan sa pag-publish sa resulta.)</i>
Sharing of Findings (Pagpaambit sa Nakaplagan)	The results of this study will be presented during the thesis/dissertation final defense of the researcher. Also, the research findings may be shared through publications and conferences with the assurance that the identities of the respondents will remain confidential. A printed copy of the completed study will be provided to the participants.

		<i>(Ang mga resulta niini nga pagtuon ipresenta sa panahon sa final defense sa thesis/ dissertation sa nagtuon. Ang mga nakaplagan sa pagtuon posible nga ipaambit pinaagi sa mga publications ug conferences nga adunay kapanigurohan nga dili mabutyag ang pagkatawo sa mga partisipante. Pagahatagan og isa ka giimprinta nga kopya sa kumpleto nga pagtuon ang mga partisipante.)</i>
Rights to Refuse or Withdraw (Katungod sa Pagpalibabad o Pag-undang)	to or	You are free to withdraw or terminate participation at any stage of the study, without the need to give any reason. You will not be penalized in case of termination of participation. <i>(Gawasnon ka nga moatras or moundang sa pag-apil sa bisan asa nga punto sa pagtuon nga dili na magkinahanglan pa ug rason. Dili ka ipamulta sa pag-atras o pag-undang.)</i>
Who to Contact (Kinsa ang Kontakon)		Should there be any queries as a parent, you can contact the researcher through the following details: <i>(Kung adunay mga pangutana, mamhimo nga mokontak pinaagi aning mga detalye:)</i> Name of the Researcher (Ngalan sa Nagtuon): <u>Mary Lord V. Mernelo</u> Cellphone Number/s: <u>09381158061</u> e-mail ad: <u>vmarylord@gmail.com</u> STATEMENT BY THE RESEARCHER (PAGPADAYAG SA NAGTUON) I will read the Information sheet to the potential participant. With the best of my ability, I make sure that the participant will understand the interview questions and that possible follow-up interviews may be undertaken. <i>(Akong pagabasahon ang mga nasulat niining Information Sheet ngadto sa potensyal nga partisipante. Kutob sa akong mahimo siguroon nako nga masabtan sa partisipante ang mga pangutana sa interview ug ang possible nga follow-up nga interviews.)</i> I can assure that the participant will be given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions raised will be answered fully. I can likewise assure that the participant will not be coerced into giving consent that must be free and voluntary. <i>(Gisiguro ko nga ang partisipante mahatagan og panahon sa pagpangutana kabahin niining pagtuon og ang tanang pangutana nga iyang gihatag matubag sa hingpit. Siguroon ko usab ang maong partisipante dili mapugos sa paghatag sa pagtugot nga kinahanglan nga gawasnon og boluntaryo.)</i> A copy of this Informed Consent Form will be provided to the participant. <i>(Ang kopya sa niining Informed Consent Form ihatag ngadto sa respondent.)</i> Print Name of Researcher (Ngalan sa Nagtuon): <u>Mary Lord V. Mernelo</u>

PART II. CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

This research entitled “Leadership Support and Staff Competence on the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation in a Private Higher Education Institution” by Mary Lord V. Mernelo with the aim of gathering information and data pertaining to the effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 implementation, has been presented and explained to me clearly. Since the study involves non-teaching personnel, I am chosen as one of the participants.

(Kini nga pagtuon gititulohan, “Leadership Support and Staff Competence on the Effectiveness of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation in a Private Higher Education Institution” ni Mary Lord V. Mernelo, nga adunay tumong sa pagkuha og impormasyon ug datos kabahin sa pagka-epektibo sa pagtuman sa ISO 21001:2018, gipresenta ug gipasabot og klaro kanako. Tungod kay ang pagtuon kay kabahin sa mga kawaning dili magtutudlo , ako napilian isip usa sa mga partisipante.)

I have read the foregoing Informed Consent Form, or it has been read to me. I had the opportunity to ask questions, which were subsequently answered fully. I consent voluntarily to be a participant of this study.

(Akong nabasa ang nauna nga Informed Consent Form, o gibasa kini kanako. Natagaan ako og higayon nga makapangutana nga natubag sa hingpit. Ako mosugot nga boluntaryo nga mahimong participant sa niining pagtuon.)

Print Name of Participant (Ngalan sa Partisipante): _____

Signature of Participant (Pirma sa Partisipante): _____

Date: [MM/DD/YYYY] _____

If Illiterate (Kung dili makasulat ug makabasa)

If the respondent is illiterate, a witness who is literate will sign. The respondent will choose him/ her and who is without connection with the researcher or the research group to attest this undertaking. The respondent will affix his thumb print.

[Kung ang participant kay dili makabasa o makasulat, mopirma ang usa ka makabasa ug makasulat nga testigo. Ang respondent ang mopili kaniya nga walay koneksyon sa nagtuon o sa iyang grupo para mopamatuod sa gimbuhaton. Ang respondent mobutang sa iyang tamla (thumb print)].

Name and Signature of the Witness

(Ngalan ug Firma sa Testigo)

Thumb mark

CURRICULUM VITAE**PERSONAL DATA**

Name : Mary Lord V. Mernelo
Age : 34 y/o
Birthdate : December 17, 1991
Civil Status : Married
Religion : Roman Catholic
Home Address : P-1 Talisay Malaubang, Ozamiz City
Parents : Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin O. Vergara (deceased both parents)
Spouse : Ernie Joie L. Mernelo
Children : Niña Fawziya V. Mernelo
Emmanuel Jord V. Mernelo

**EDUCATION**

Graduate : Master in Business Administration
Misamis University
Ozamiz City
(On-going)

College : Bachelor of Science in Office Administration
Misamis University
Ozamiz City
March 2013-2014

Secondary : Santa Maria Goretti College
Mahayag, Zamboanga Del Sur
March 2007-2008

Elementary : Igpit Elementary School
Igpit, Opol, Misamis Oriental
March 2003-2004

PROFESSIONAL ELIGIBILITY : None

WORK EXPERIENCE

April 2018- Present : Office Staff
Misamis University
Aguada, Ozamiz City

June 2015- March 2018 : Cashier
RJ Playsite Lending Investors
Antipolo City, Rizal

February 2015- May 2018 : Audit Clerk
Aljonie Lending Corporation
Davao City

Nov. 2013- January 2015 : Sales Clerk
Pretilee Boutique
Toril, Davao City

SEMINARS/TRAININGS

- 4th International Conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change 2025 (IConBaCC),
theme: “Sustainable Peace with Nature: A Global Commitment towards Net Zero”
Venue: Misamis University, H.T. Feliciano St., Ozamiz City Philippines
Date: September 25 – 26, 2025
- Mastering Time, Boosting Productivity & Efficiency at Work
Venue: Function Hall, Misamis University
Date: April 12, 2025
- Enhancing Training in DynEd-NEO + Next Generation Online English Proficiency Program
Venue: JEEP Laboratory, Misamis University
Date: July 22-August 22, 2024
- Seminar on Stress Management
Venue: HF 304, Misamis University
Date: March 9, 2024
- Seminar-Workshop in Basic Computer and Internet Productivity Tools
Venue: HF 304, Misamis University
Date: February 17, 2024
- Seminar on Cyber Security Awareness
Venue: Function Hall, Misamis University
Date: January 12, 2024
- Seminar on Customer Service
Venue: Instructional Media Center, Misamis University
Date: June 3, 2023
- Seminar on Financial Literacy
Venue: Instructional Media Center, Misamis University
Date: May 20, 2023
- Seminar on 5S and Document Control
Venue: Instructional Media Center, Misamis University
Date: May 13, 2023
- Seminar on Cyber Security Awareness
Venue: Instructional Media Center, Misamis University
Date: January 12, 2023